

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1063

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

UNCLAS PRAGUE 2693

VIENNA FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT CZ

SUBJECT: ANOTHER CZECHOSLOVAK PRONOUNCEMENT THAT PRICES WILL
REMAIN STABLE

REF: (A) PRAGUE 2482, (B) PRAGUE 2527

1. AT THE CONCLUDING CEREMONIES OF THE CZECH "HARVEST HOME"
CELEBRATION AT CESKE BUDEJOVICE, ON SEPT 5. PREMIER LUBOMIR
STROUGAL IN A SPEECH ATTENDED BY PRESIDENT HUSAK, ALOIS INDRA,
JOSEF KORCAK, OTHER TOP PARTY, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND SOVIET
GUESTS, SAID THAT PRICES WOULD NOT BE RAISED FOR BASIC
LIVING NECESSITIES (FOOD).

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2. RATHER THAN TYING STABLE PRICES TO INCREASED PRODUCTI-

VITY, AS PRESIDENT HUSAK DID IN HIS SPEECH AT NITRA (REFTEL A), STROUGAL CALLED UPON THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE NOT TO WASTE FOOD AND TO COMBAT WASTAGE OF FOOD "THROUGH A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH BY EVERYONE OF US". ALTHOUGH ADMITTING YELDS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS HAD BEEN "ADVERSELY INFLUENCED" BY THE DROUGHT HE DEFERRED TO HUSAK'S STATEMENTS THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAD THE WHEREWITHALL TO COMPLETELY SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION IN THE FUTURE. STROUGAL ALSO SAID FOOD IS CHEAP IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN COMPARISON WITH THE WORLD AROUND, BUT THIS FACT SHOULD NOT GIVE THE PEOPLE "REASON FOR DUMPING HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF TONS OF BREAD, MEAT AND OTHER FOODS INTO THE GARBAGE CANS".

3. COMMENT: HIS SPEECH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION THE CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE DRAWING BACK A BIT FROM THE LINKAGE BETWEEN HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND MAINTAINING THE PRICE LINE, BUT THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY SINCE IT CAME SO CLOSE AFTER HUSAK'S STATEMENTS--WHICH WE REGARD AS DEFINITIVE IN ANY CASE. RATHER, IT APPEARS STROUGAL WAS MAINLY REAFFIRMING THE DETERMINATION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERSHIP TO AVOID PRICE HIKES FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT HE CHOSE TO LECTURE ON "WASTE NOT WANT NOT", WHILE HUSAK GAVE A PEP TALK TO "WORK HARDER AND PRODUCE MORE".
BYRNE

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